5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 CC6 Iban OC6

But the most valuable ornament in the ruai by far is of course the bunch of human heads which hangs over the fireplace like a bunch of fruit; these are the heads obtained on various warpaths by various members of the family, dead and living, and are handed down from father to son as the most precious heirlooms, more precious even than the ancient jars which they prize so highly. The next ornament of paramount importance is the bag of charms which is fastened to the centrepost and which is in like manner handed down from generation to generation and about which there is a great to do if any of the charms are lost or stolen.[1] Other posts are often adorned with trophies of the chase, horns and such like of deer and wild cattle and the heads of animals such as bears, monkeys, and crocodiles killed by the young boys. The empty sheaths of the swords and knives of the family are suspended on wooden hooks, while the naked blades are placed in racks above their heads.

The *tanju* or open-air platform is in front of the *ruai* and is railed at the edge, but the rail is often so slight that it is unsafe to lean against it. The flooring is usually of ironwood the better to stand exposure to the weather. It is used as a lounge in the evening, the view from it being extensive and the breeze refreshing. While the sun is shining the paddy is put out to dry as are the clothes and a variety of other things. The family whetstone and dye vat are kept here under the eaves of the roof.

The *sadau* or loft is used to stow away the baskets and agricultural instruments during the season they are not in use. The paddy is stowed away here in tubs of bark and also the seed for next year's farm.[2] Young women often sleep here and so do the young men and boys who are unprovided with curtains when the mosquitoes and sandflies are troublesome down below. They burn a fragrant bark to keep off the mosquitoes.

Whenever it is deemed expedient by the Sea Dyaks to shift from one locality to another, or to abandon an old habitation in favour of a new one, a general meeting is convened to consider the proposition and the desirability of the measure is fully discussed.[3] If a move be decided upon a few experienced men

[1] While on the Kejang river "a Kanowit gave me the tusk of a crocodile which devoured his sister, and showed me a bear's tusk which was lost to his family by an uncle who was killed by a Ukiet and to recover which he a few years ago killed the Ukiet. He showed me another tusk which was dropped by one of the boars which attacked and destroyed the house of an ancestor living at Lakut." Articles like these appear to constitute their charms.

[2] The Kyans, Kiñahs, and Lanahans stow their paddy in barns built for the purpose. The floor is six feet above the ground, and the posts are encircled with circular wooden discs to keep off the rats.

[3] The Kiñahs move away every few years so as to be always near heavy bush which they prefer for their farms.

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 CC6 Iban CC6

are deputed to select a site and to report on its adaptability. If there be no reason to be dissatisfied with the choice, others are sent to hear whether the birds they venerate are for it, or against it. Three days in succession they visit the spot and if the bird omens be favourable they proceed to work at once, and on the following morning the men turn out in a body with axes and choppers to hew down the jungle which is then left to dry. Another general meeting is thereupon convened to determine the question of the *tuah* or chieftainship, the measurement of the timbers, and the sequence of the rooms. It is customary to place the richest people in the centre of the village that they may exercise hospitality to all comers, and the boldest at either extremity so that they may defend the approaches if called upon to do so. The next move is to appoint an evening for the people to meet at the site of the new village. The ground is then cleared and measured out and pegs are put in where the posts are to stand. A piece of bamboo is then stuck in the ground, filled with water and the aperture covered with leaves, a spear and a shield are placed beside it, and the whole is surrounded by a rail. The rail is to protect the bamboo from being upset by wild animals and the weapons are to warn strangers not to touch it. If there is much evaporation by the morning the place is considered hot and unhealthy and is abandoned. Half-a-dozen people or so remain to keep watch and beat their tomtoms all night to frighten away evil spirits. Their friends return early in the morning and if all is well they set to and dig the holes, commencing with the chief's quarters and working simultaneously to left and right of him. Every family must kill a fowl or a pig before the holes can be dug, and the blood must be smeared on the feet and sprinkled on the posts to pacify *Pulang Gana* the tutelary deity of the earth. The posts must be planted firmly, for if one were to give way subsequently it would be regarded as a disastrous event and the house would be abandoned. All combine to labour collectively until the skeleton of the village is complete, and then every family turns its attention to its own apartments. When the building is sufficiently advanced to receive them they pack up their valuables and convey them by water if practicable, halting on the way until they obtain a favourable omen when they proceed rejoicing. Their valuables and cotton stuffs may not be moved into the house before themselves, they must be taken with them; this is required by custom. Before the village can be occupied a pig must be killed and its entrails examined and if the reading be unsatisfactory it is abandoned. After everything is settled a cup of *tuak* (toddy) is passed round.

When a family proposes to leave the village and remove else-

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 OC6 Iban OC6
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I
166 where it must give an *ensilan* (propitiatory gift ?) or be responsible for the consequences if a death ensue; a fowl, or a bit of
431 iron, or a pig if the village be a large one is usually given.
I
When a person dies the floor of the room in which he died is
768 changed.
B
In a Kiñah village the smithy is in a central situation. The
326 Kiñahs smelt their own ore and manufacture their own iron ware. I watched the operation and procured a few samples of the metal. There is nothing peculiar to describe; there were an anvil, a couple of hammers, and a pair of twyers as usual, a charcoal furnace, a quantity of impure ore, and the usual primitive bellows. These people temper their own ore with a
B fragment of European ironware, when they can get it.
532 In front of a Lahanan village on the Rejang river there were
831 four huge effigies, with the genital organs as usual fully developed; no indecency is intended, being merely relics of
I primitive worship [*sic*].
824 A fruit like an apple, called *buoh randan* by the Dyaks, is used to destroy vermin.

B
3. *Slaves.*

567 *Out*door slaves become so either by descent, by purchase, or
435 by an amelioration of condition from having been *in*door slaves. *In*door slaves become so by purchase or descent. In cases where both parents have been *out*door slaves the *tabusan* (purchase or freedom money) is 40 reals (= $28·80), or one picul of guns, unless the child is of tender years, when the tabusan is 80 catties (= $21·60). In cases where one or both parents have been *in*door slaves, but have become *out*door slaves at marriage, the children are *out*door slaves.

When one parent is an *in*door slave and the other an *out*door slave, the children are divided between the owners of the parents, the first child following the condition of the father, supposing there be more than one child, *e.g.*: the father is *in*door slave of A, and the mother is *out*door slave of B; a child is born and sex being immaterial to the question, it becomes half *in*door slave of A and half *out*door slave of B. The *tabusan* of an indoor slave having been fixed by the practice of the courts at 60 reals (= $43·20), and that of an *out*door slave by descent at 40 reals, it will be clear that the *tabusan* on account of this first child to A is in this case 30 reals, and to B 20 reals, should the parents decide on purchasing the freedom of their child, subject, however, if very young to reductions as above. But when two children are born, the first becomes *in*door slave of A and the

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

252 their pestles in quick succession at one mortar. In this way the grain is freed from husk, and is made ready for food.

Each family farms its own piece of land. Much of
423 such work as cutting down the jungle and planting is done
476 by a combination of labour, several families agreeing to work for each other in turn. By this means all the planting on the land belonging to a particular family is done in one day, and all the grain ripens at the same time.

361 When the Dyaks wish to abandon an old habitation in
166 favour of a new one, a general meeting of the inhabitants is held to consider the matter, and the desirability of
623 building a new house is fully discussed. Sometimes it happens that some families do not agree with the wishes of the majority, and these families split off and join another house. If a move be decided on, a few experienced men are deputed to choose a site, and to report on its adaptability. There are several matters to be taken into account. The site must be for preference on rising ground, and be near a good supply of water. There must also be some jungle near, where the inmates can get their firewood, and there must be large tracts of land not far away where they can plant their paddy.

361 When the new house has to be built on the low-lying, marshy ground in the lower reaches of the river, the choice is not difficult. All that is necessary is to choose a part of the river where the current is not very strong. But in the hill country it is not easy to find a site where the ground is fairly level, and can accommodate a large house of thirty or forty families.

342 Before building on the chosen site the omen birds are
[787] consulted. If the omens be favourable, all the men and

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

264 their table. They have their rice on plates, or sometimes upon clean leaves. They eat with their fingers, dipping the hand when necessary into the common stock of salt, or common dish of meat or vegetables. They eat with their right hand, compressing the rice into portions of convenient size.

262 Nearly every animal is eaten by the Dyaks; fish, venison, and pork are eaten by all, but many tribes eat monkeys, snakes, and even crocodiles.

264 When breakfast is over, they clean the crockery and
352 put it away. The mats are swept and taken up, and the
231 refuse thrown through the open floor for the pigs and poultry under the house to eat.

622 Each long Dyak village house has its headman, who generally occupies a room in the middle of the house. He is called the *tuai rumah*—"the old man or chief of the house"—and he settles all disputes among the inmates, and decides the amount of the fine the guilty party has to pay. Great deference is paid to him, and as a general rule his people abide by his decisions. But his power is only one of persuasion, and depends upon his personal ability and sense of justice. He cannot in any way coerce his people into obedience. Upon the prestige and conduct of this *tuai rumah* depends the number of families a Dyak house contains. If he be a man of strong personal character, clear-headed, and upright in his dealings, many will settle under him. If he be otherwise, he will quickly lose the families living in his house. They will migrate to other houses where the headman is one they admire and respect.

166 There are certain laws among the Dyaks with regard to
621 a family leaving a house. If a new house is to be built, any families of the former inmates may refuse to make

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

166 their home in the new house, and may join some other
621 village or decide to build a house for themselves. If a family wish to leave a house at any other time, they must not only leave the posts, roof, and flooring of their part of the house, but they must undertake to keep these in repair until such a time as the house is pulled down and a new one built.

627 The Sea Dyak administration of law among themselves by the headman of the house has its advantages. Disputes are settled at once and on the spot. Unfortunately sometimes prejudice and the ties of relationship impede the carrying out of justice, but more often the Chiefs are peculiarly alive to the advantage of a just administration, which never fails to secure the aid and support of the majority of the people.

I have often been present when some small dispute was settled by the headman of a Dyak house. Both parties and their friends sat on mats in a circle before the Chief. Each party had their say; the headman asked a few questions. Then he pronounced judgment somewhat after this fashion. He began by saying that as the disputants were living in the same house—"brothers and sisters" so to speak—it was not necessary to inflict a heavy punishment; all that was needed was to impose a small fine to show which was in the wrong, and one party must pay the other a fine of so many cups or so many plates as the case required.

Whenever I have been present, the fine was cheerfully paid. The punishment, in fact, was very slight. Though the Government recognize this method of settling disputes among themselves, still, if Dyaks are discontented with the [692] decision of their headmen, they can always bring their case for trial before the Government officer of the district.

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34. Further analysis reveals that the 140 affines mentioned above fall into three distinct categories:

(*a*) married persons (i.e. men and women living in state of wedlock in their spouses' *bilek-families*); 109 individuals, or 78% of total;

(*b*) widows and widowers (i.e. men and women who, despite the death of their spouses are still living as members of their deceased spouses' *bilek-families*); 28 individuals, or 20% of the total;

(*c*) divorcees (i.e. men and women still living as members of their former spouses' *bilek-families*, despite the fact that their former spouses—now divorced—have taken up residence elsewhere); 3 individuals, or 2% of the total.

Table 8, shows the way in which the affines of these three categories were domiciled.

TABLE 8. DOMICILE OF AFFINES

Category	*Men practising uxorilocal domicile*	*Women practising virilocal domicile*
Married persons (i.e. actually living with spouse).	61	48
Widows and widowers	2	26
Divorcees	2	1
Totals ...	65	75

589
582
166

35. A noticeable feature of this Table is the marked preponderance of widows over widowers. But it must not be thought that this phenomenon has some special connection with affines. A similar sort of preponderance occurs in the case of widows (27 instances) and widowers (5 instances) who are living as members of their natal *bilek-families*. This state of affairs results very largely from the fact that Iban men tend to marry women a good deal younger than themselves. It is one of most cherished customs of the Iban that men—and particularly young men—should periodically leave their long-houses and venture out into the world to seek their fortunes. These journeys, or *bejalai*, frequently last for several years on end, and often extend to the remotest corner of Borneo, and even to Malaya and the Islands of Indonesia. They have two main aims: the acquisition of valuable property and of social prestige. For most young men these journeys are an overruling passion, and, as a result, they do not settle down to domestic life until a good deal later than would otherwise be the case. And when they do settle down they tend to marry women a number of years younger than themselves. An analysis of some 34 marriages at Rumah Nyala (where I was able, from long acquaintance, to make a careful estimate of ages), shows that on an average husbands were from six to seven years older than their wives. There was only one instance of a husband being younger than his wife, and the ages of about a quarter of the husbands exceeded those of their wives by more than 10 years. This situation helps to explain the preponderance of widows over widowers, though it is probable that other factors are also at work.(12)

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36. Let us now turn to the 109 married individuals who were living as members of their spouses' *bilek-families*. The domicile of these persons is shewn in Table 9.

TABLE 9.

Long-house	*Males practising uxorilocal domicile*	*Females practising virilocal domicile*
Rumah Nyala	15	19
Rumah Sibat	16	12
Rumah Tungku	30	17
Totals:	61	48

Once again, it will be observed that the two types of marriage occur with roughly equal incidence: uxorilocal domicile comprising just under 56% of the total, and virilocal domicile just over 44%. In a more numerous series of 284 marriages—both past and present—taken from genealogies collected at Rumah Nyala, Rumah Sibat and Rumah Tungku, there were 145 instances of uxorilocal residence (or, 51% approx.), as against 139 instances (or, 49% approx.) of virilocal residence

37. These evenly balanced percentages are a clear demonstration of the ambilateral principles on which Iban social life is founded. According to Iban custom both forms of marriage are fully permissible, and in practice they have a very nearly equal concurrence. To put it in another way, men marry out of their natal *bileks* almost as frequently as do women. We may, then, describe Iban marriage as being *ambilocal*, meaning, by this term to denote, a system of marriage in which *either* uxorilocal *or* virilocal residence may be followed, and in which the rules of kinship and inheritance result in neither form of domicile receiving any sort of special preference.

(12) It is well possible that expectation of life is higher for the home-dwelling women than for the much travelled men, though I was not able to collect any conclusive evidence on this point.

612 has first cousins living in the Mujong, Tiau and Melinau Rivers, about 40 miles away by river distance; and third cousins living in the head-waters of the Baleh, and the Merirai and Gat Rivers, more than 50 miles away. In other words, these kindred relationships, though only of third cousin range, cover all of the main tributaries of the Baleh, and an area of many hundred square miles.

612 101. Another factor which helps to consolidate the kindred is the custom of adoption. As we have already seen adoption is a widely prevalent phenomenon in Iban society, occurring
647 in about 36% of *bilek-families;* and, moreover, with but rare exceptions, adopted individuals are always the children of near kin. Table 7, gives a detailed analysis of 48 cases of adoption from the three long-houses of our sample, and shows that adoptions of the off-spring of siblings, first, second and third cousins, account for 87% of the total. The relationship to an adopted individual may be either through males or females, and it is just as likely to stem from the *pun bilek* of a family, as from one of its affinal members. Again, although adoption almost always occurs within the kindred, the kin concerned may be either living in the same long-house, or be members of different communities. Table 21, which is based on an analysis of 32 recent cases of adoption, for which trustworthy data were available, indicates that adoption from beyond the local community is the slightly more prevalent of the two types.

TABLE 21. ADOPTION.

Long-house.	*Adoptions between kin who are members of the same long-house.*	*Adoptions between kin who are members of different long-houses.*
Rumah Nyala	3	7
Rumah Sibat	6	2
Rumah Tungku	6	8
Totals:	15	17

An adopted individual possesses the same rights as those conferred by birth, and is a full jural member of his adoptive *bilek-family.* It is usual however, for the true parents to maintain an active interest in the well-being of their child, and to pay him occasional visits. In this way the institution of adoption strengthens bonds already existing within the kindred, and particularly, when the kin concerned are distantly related, or members of different long-houses. As the Iban themselves put it: "If adoption takes place, kindred become close again; if there is no adoption, they become more and more distant and turn into strangers;" (*"Enti bisi ngambo anak, damping baru kaban; enti enda ngambo, jauh se jauh, nyadi orang bukai"*). The same sort of statement could be applied to the custom of marrying within the kindred.

The Formation of Long-House Communities.

621 102. We have now examined briefly the nature of the kindreds whichh characterize Iban society, and the manner in which they are consolidated by the prevalence of marriage and adoption between close kin. To what extent, it may be asked, do the members of a kindred live together in the same long-house? This is not a question which can be readily answered in general terms, for the pattern of kinship ties in a long-house of any size are extremely complicated, and defy simple description. Let us direct our attention therefore, to a detailed examination of the kinship structure of a single long-house community, taking as our example, Rumah Nyala, of the Sungai Sut. This has the advantage that it forms a frame-work for the subsequent sections of this report, for it is to Rumah Nyala, that most of my data on shifting cultivation refer.

621 103. Although it would be an overstatement to describe the Iban as nomadic, migratory they certainly are, for, during the past 130 years, the people we are here discussing have travelled
● 162 from the head-waters of the Batang Ai and Kanyau, by way of the Katibas and Rejang, to occupy the Baleh and its tributaries. For example, Temenggong Koh, who was born at Pulau Ensulit in the Ulu Kanyau (then Dutch Borneo), is now (1951), farming virgin jungle on the western bank of the Baleh, some five miles above Nanga Putai, and distant more than 200 miles, by river, from the place of his birth. The main incentive behind the remarkable migrations of the Iban has been a desire to exploit new tracts of primeval forest, and the tendency has been for communities to abandon their land as soon as a few lucrative harvests have been reaped, and move on to fresh precincts. In this way, the frontier of advance was pushed forward, first by one community, and then by another moving up from the rear. All these communities, it should be noted, were sections of the same tribe, and their members were all inter-related, in varying degrees, by cognatic ties. When the advance reached the extensive, and virtually unoccupied valley of the Rejang above the mouth of the Katibas, and particularly when the Baleh and its tributaries were opened to settlement, the possibilities before a *bilek-family* were numerous. Any of a dozen or more long-houses, each occupying a different tract of virgin land, and each containing recognized kin, were potential places of abode. As an autonomous unit, a *bilek-family* might join any of these various long-houses, where kith or kin were already members, and so it happened that *bilek-families* often set off, either singly, or in twos or threes, to attach themselves to some long-house, the situation of which they considered especially advantageous. Provided certain essential ritual formalities had been observed, a *bilek-family* was free to leave one long-house, and join another, whenever it desired. Such independent movement was frequently resorted

to, and when a whole community decided to shift to a new territory, it was seldom, if ever, that all its *bilek-families* remained together. Although the majority usually continued their old association, almost always some would detach themselves, and disperse to separate destinations.

104. From these observations it will be seen that it becomes very important to investigate the history of a long-house, if we are to reach an understanding of its social structure. Despite the fact that the Baleh Iban are entirely non-literate, it is still possible to secure fairly reliable historical data, for all the existing long-houses on the Baleh and its tributaries, were founded subsequent to mid-1922, when the Iban were first permitted to re-settle the area after the insurrections of the years 1915—1919. This means that no Baleh long-house was more than 30 years old at the time (1949—1951) when my investigations were being carried out. It was possible therefore to collect, from members of the senior generation, detailed first-hand accounts of the various long-houses which I selected for study. My investigations show that the setting up of the pioneer long-house is almost always the undertaking of a small group of *bilek-families*. Usually they are fewer than ten in number. Furthermore, they are invariably a compact group, their members being inter-related by intimate ties of kinship. For example, the various *bileks* commonly contain individuals who are either siblings, or first or second cousins. These pioneer *bilek-families*, we may term *the founding group* of a long-house. The importance of this founding group is profound, for the *bilek-families* of which it is composed continue to exert a decisive influence, even although the long-house subsequently increases considerably in size. Once a new long-house has become successfully established, and especially if it has access to tracts of virgin land, other *bilek-families*, from less favourable areas, will attach themselves to it. Typically, they they arrive one by one over the course of the years, and build on to one end or other of the existing long-house. These late-comers are always related to the founding group. That is, one of their members—natal, adopted or affinal—has some sort of cognatic tie with one of the members of the founding *bilek-families*. By this process of accretion, a long-house community gradually increases in size, and in the complexity of its social structure. But, sooner or later, it reaches an optimum stage of development, and then, as its land becomes exhausted, odd *bileks* will begin to break away and move off to join long-houses on the frontier of advance, where there is unclaimed virgin forest waiting to be felled and farmed. As already noted, remote, up-river communities tend to be larger than those that occupy areas where the original jungle has been very largely worked out; and it is the pioneer settlements which grow most rapidly in size. A good example is Rumah Sibat. This house had its beginning in 1924, when six *bilek-families*, from the long-house of Penghulu Koh, in Sungai Dia, below Kapit, settled in one of the lower reaches of the Sungai Melinau, a tributary of the Mujong. Before them lay thousands of acres of untouched forest land. By 1950, the original six *bileks*—by the two processes of accretion and partition—had become 32. In addition, four other long-house communities are now settled in the Sungai Melinau.

The Formation of Rumah Nyala, of the Sungai Sut.

105. Rumah Nyala, the long-house in which we are particularly interested, lies some four to five miles from the mouth of the Sungai Sut, where it was founded in the years, 1922—23. Its exact site is a terrace on the northern (i.e. true right) bank of the Sut, about three hundred yards down-river from a small tributary stream called the Sungai Luba. A residence plan of Rumah Nyala, as in May, 1950, appears as Figure 2. Each numbered section is a *bilek*, or family apartment. In all but one case, the name of the *pun bilek* (c.f.: Para. 48), or the senior natal member of the occupying family is given. The exception is apartment No. 18, where the name of a widow (whose children are still very young) appears instead. It will be noted that there were 20 separate family apartments in one line, giving the house a total length of just over 100 yards. Two apartments—No. 6 and No. 14—were occupied by families still sharing the same *bilek*, despite the fact that partition had taken place. These were temporary arrangements, pending the construction of new quarters; in each case both families had built, and were occupying separate farm houses (*dampa*) and farm huts (*langkau*). Two families—No. 21 and No. 22—both recent arrivals at Rumah Nyala, had built on to the *tanju* of the main long-house; and one other family of newcomers—No. 23—were sharing apartment No. 4, which belonged to long-standing members of Rumah Nyala, who happened to be their kin. There were thus three bilek-families (out of a total of 25), which were not provided with apartments of their own in the main long-house. A similar state of affairs is encountered at most Iban long-houses. This draws attention to the important point that a bilek-family is essentially a jurally defined unit, and that its existence does not depend on actual ownership of a long-house apartment. However, it is the ambition of every family to own a *bilek* of its own, and its members always strive to build private quarters as soon as they can after arriving from another area, or after partition has occurred.

106. The Kinship composition of the 25 *bilek-families* of Rumah Nyala is recorded in Figure 3.* All 140 members of the community appear. Each family is enclosed in its own *bilek*, and, as far as possible, the actual residential, or territorial arrangement of the families has been followed. Thus the *bilek-families* occupying apartments No. 1—No. 20, are shown in one straight line, just as in the long-house itself. Families No. 21, No. 22 and No. 23, are shown slightly detached, and for their separate sites, Figure 2, should be consulted. The exact composition of each bilek-family is defined by an encircling line. In addition, a few of the principal cognatic ties between neighbouring families have been recorded; but, of necessity, only a limited number of these ties have been included, for in a residential plan of this kind it is not feasible to draw in all of the intricate bilateral links that do, in fact, exist; if this were done, the lines would be so numerous and crossed as to make the plan unintelligible.

621 612 592 of the *bilek-families* of Rumah Nyala fell into this category. The situation can be summed up by saying that the framework of Iban social organization at the level of the local community is *bilateral kinship*, and that a *bilek-family* is free to join any long-house containing cognatic kin of either husband or wife. This, it should be noted, is a different principle from that which operates within the *bilek-family* itself. A child is always a member of either its father's or its mother's natal *bilek*, depending on whether its parents practise virilocal or uxorilocal marriage; but it can never be a member of both their *bileks*, always one or the other. This means that *bilek* membership, inheritance, etc. is always through either a female or a male link, and it is this system that we have termed *ambilateral filiation*. Further, a child only leaves the *bilek* in which it has grown up, to be adopted, or to marry into some other family; we may say, therefore, that within the *bilek-family*, filiation is ambilateral and permanent—the only exceptions being adoption and marriage. The principles governing long-house organization are quite different however, and cannot be properly described as ambilateral. Instead they are based on bilateral kinship, and a recognition that cognatic ties, whether traced through mother or father, are of equal value. Either, or both, may determine the local community in which a *bilek-family* resides, and *bilek-families* are perfectly free to move from one long-house to another within any of the kindreds to which they belong.

621 166 133. Occasionally, because of quarrelling, bad omens, or persistently poor harvests, a long-house will break up, and its constituent *bilek-families* disperse to several different destinations. During the year 1949, two such cases occurred in the Sungai Sut, the houses concerned being Rumah Kubu (of 11 *bileks*), and Rumah Angkau (of 15 *bileks*). Listed below are the destinations to which their various *bilek-families* dispersed.

A. *Rumah Kubu, of Sungai Sut.*

Number of bileks.	*Destination.*
4	Rumah Sipang, Ulu Merirai,
2	Rumah Anye, Sungai Mujong,
2	Rumah Nyala, Sungai Sut,
1	Rumah Suntong, Sungai Merirai,
1	Rumah Sebau, Nanga Baleh,
1	Rumah Ubong, Sungai Poi.

B. *Rumah Angkau, of Sungai Bena (a tributary of S. Sut).*

Number of bileks.	*Destination.*
6	Sungai Ensulai, below Kapit,
1	Sungai Merirai,
1	Sungai Menuan, below Kapit,
1	Rumah Unyong, Sungai Bena,
6	*remained at* Rumah Angkau, Sungai Bena.

In the case of Rumah Angkau, it will be noted that nine *bileks* (out of a total of 15) dispersed to four different destinations, leaving six families at the original site. Rumah Kubu presents an even more striking example however, for here the site (which had been occupied since about 1932), was entirely abandoned, and the 11 *bilek-families* dispersed to six widely scattered destinations. Sungai Poi is distant more than 100 river miles, from Rumah Sipang, a pioneer community in the head-waters of the Merirai. We are here confronted then, with the complete disintegration of a long-house community, its constituent *bilek-families* terminating their association, and separating to merge with other already established communities. Moreover, each *bilek-family* joined a community in which there were already kinsfolk of one of its members. This is further evidence of the remarkably wide area over which kindred ties ramify. But most importantly, these examples of community disintegration demonstrate with clarity, the fundamental nature of the Iban long-house community, showing that it is a free and conditional association of corporate family groups. In other words, being part of a long-house does not deprive a *bilek-family* of its essential autonomy. In Iban social organisation, there is no principle of more vital consequence.

The Long-House Community as Corporate Group.

624 134. From the analysis so far, we can say that a long-house community is a serial aggregation of *bilek-families*, confederated by cognatic kinship. Moreover, it is an open, and not a closed group, for *bilek-families* are entitled to leave and join at will (subject, of course, to Government regulations). To what extent then is the long-house community as a whole, a corporate group? This is a difficult question to answer in general terms, but it may be observed, from the outset, that the degree of corporateness is low, and that inasmuch as it does exist it stems from ritual concepts, rather than from collective ownership of land or property. Let us first deal with these two last categories.

621 311 423 135. Until fairly recent times, land in the Kapit District, has been a commodity in virtually unrestricted supply. When an Iban community had felled all the virgin jungle of the area in which it was living, it simply moved on to another territory, where there was fresh forest land to be exploited. Under these conditions land was not a highly valued commodity, for on all sides there lay vast tracts of unpeopled, primeval jungle, awaiting the onslaught of axe and fire. But with

spirits. This is made known in dreams, and should there have been a series of unwarranted deaths, a community will often flee their long-house, and stay away for months, while waiting for it to become 'cool' again. One of the strangest sights which the hinterland of Sarawak has to offer is an Iban long-house, whose inhabitants have fled in terror of 'unseen monsters.' Hung about with esoteric emblems and charms—an unavailing barricade of protective magic these—and strewn with a medly of abandoned possessions, the house stands aloof, silent and deserted, as though its owners had indeed been suddenly spirited away.

167. The rites which accompany its construction, and those of the ceremony of first entry are all aimed at producing a long-house in which men, their wives and children, can live in ritual security and safe keeping amid the known perils of their world. Sometimes even more elaborate rites are staged. The most important of these is the *gawai engkune*, in which all *bilek-families* join. It is commonly held a few weeks after first occupation of the new house. A temporary shrine (*ranyai*), containing offerings, omen-sticks, charms and pieces of wood termed *engkune*, is erected on the *tuai* of the *tuai burong*. For one whole night, a party of four men skilled in the task, encircle the spot, chanting an invocation (*timang*) to the gods. In magical and poetic words, they describe the arrival of the gods, who, at the behest of the Iban, build for them a wonderful new house. Especially prominent is Apai Nendak (the father of the omen bird, Nendak), who brings most of the materials for this house built by the gods, and furnishes it with charms potent against all manner of evils. The gods, it is believed, enter the shrine charging the objects stored there with supernatural power, and to conclude the ritual, the shrine is dismantled, and its contents shared out by the *tuai burong*, among all the *bilek-families* of the long-house. To a representative of each, he hands an omen-stick from the shrine, uttering a prayer (*sampi*) as he does so:

> "May these hallowed omen-sticks, which I now share out, protect and guard our long-house, so that free from all harm, from all sickness and disorder, we may dwell in coolness and in shade, in happiness and health—forever!"

Also shared out for preservation are pieces of wood from the shrine, for these are symbolical of the materials used by the gods in their miraculous building, which is thought of as being mystically fused with the very timbers of the Iban's own house.

168. For the maintenance of the ritual well-being of a long-house, all of its *bilek-families* are responsible. This is well illustrated by what happens when a *bilek-family* decides to leave one long-house and join another. The act of leaving is conceived of as being fraught with certain dangers for the rest of the community; and as liable to cause a fissure in the fabric of their ritual immunity. Accordingly, Iban *adat* insists that on departing from any long-house, the *bilek-family* concerned, must present the *tuai burong* with a quittance payment, or *pemali rumah*, as it is called. This absolves the family from any responsibility should their departure concur with an outcrop of sickness, or any other serious trouble, in the remaining *bileks* of the long-house. The amount of the quittance payment depends on the time of the year at which the departure takes place. The normal and proper time for moving is during the two or three months that elapse between the end of harvest, and the beginning of felling and planting. During this period the quittance payment is small: *sigi kuna* (i.e. $2), a small jar (*jagok*), and one fowl (which is sacrificed, if trouble ensues). After the commencement of a new agricultural cycle however, it becomes much heavier, for there is then a possibility that departure will injuriously affect the growing *padi* of the entire community. In this instance the quittance payment must consist of: *mungkul lapan* ($8), an adze (*bliong*), a war-knife (*nyabor*), and a sacrificial pig. In fact, irregular departure (i.e. after the planting of *padi*) is an extremely rare event, and is only likely to occur after severe quarrelling between *bilek-families*.

169. This theme of the ritual unity of the long-house community finds expression in many other fields of activity. For example, when a death occurs the whole community is affected; all farm work is abandoned for three days, and numerous mourning prohibitions come into force immediately after the burial. These, on pain of fine, must be observed by all members of the house, during a period which lasts for about one to two weeks. Again, during and following certain of the ceremonies performed by spirit-mediums, or *manangs*, all the members of the long-house become responsible for obeying prohibitions (*pemali*), which may have their origin in only one or two *bilek-families*. Thus, for three days after the ritual slaying of an *antu buyo* (a malignant spirit held to be responsible for the death of infants), no-one may bring any plant or other living thing into the long-house, for this is symbolical of the re-birth of the dreaded spirit; nor may anyone enter the long-house after dark, as an *antu buyo* is wont to do when seeking his victims. In both cases the penalty is a heavy one (i.e. equal to the spirit-medium's fee, which may be as much as $20), and a claim that the prohibition was broken unwittingly gives no reprieve. Similarly, when a woman is giving birth, or during the treatment of cotton with mordants prior to dyeing (i.e. the *ngar* process), and on many other ritual occasions, no stranger may enter any part of the long-house. On these occasions it is usual to display some kind of banner, announcing that the long-house is under ritual interdiction—indeed, the long-house is rather like a ship under quarantine. Thus, Iban always take the precaution of asking for permission, before they enter a strange long-house. The customary phrase is: "Can we climb here?" ("Tau niki ditu?"); uttered at the foot of the *tangga*. If space permitted, many additional examples could be given, but for our present purposes, sufficient evidence has been adduced to show that magico-religious concepts play a major part in uniting a long-house community under the general surveillance of their *tuai burong*. And, as we shall see presently, the *tuai burong* is also a key figure in the organization of the foremost rites of the agricultural cycle.

17:Bedford D-5 (1958) 1959 OC6 Iban OC6

Sea Dayak Diet: A Longhouse Survey

by

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During the last two and a half years I have carried out several tours of Sea Dayak areas in the Second Division visiting three or four houses each day. It was soon realised that such tours furnished only very superficial information regarding the general level of health and nutrition of these people and the prevalence of disease from which they suffer. The present study was undertaken to enquire into these questions more closely. 121

Rumah Bujak at Nanga Pruan was chosen for the study. The reasons for this were its proximity to Simanggang and the fact that this house is fortunate in having a very active, enterprising headman so that willing co-operation from the people of the longhouse was to be expected throughout the period of study. [131] [622]

From the 2nd February to the 29th November, 1958, the longhouse was visited every Saturday or Sunday by a team usually comprising the Divisional Medical Officer, a hospital assistant, laboratory technician, one or more hospital attendants and one or more trained *ulu* dressers. Sick people were examined each week, either treated on the spot or sent to Simanggang for outpatient or inpatient treatment as indicated. In addition the investigations to be described below were carried out during these weekly visits. 123

Rumah Bujak, Pruan

Before presenting the results of the study a brief description will be given of the longhouse and the way of life of the people who live in it. 175

The people of Rumah Bujak come originally from Sungai Pinggai on the Undup River. The Undup is a moderately large left branch of the Batang Lupar, the mouth of which is about twenty minutes' journey by outboard upriver from Simanggang. Sungai Pinggai is a further three hours' journey up the Undup by outboard. [166] [133] [131]

121 found them twenty years ago, the Ibans of the Sibu District have
177 accommodated to numerous influences that have been introduced to them, and especially within the past twenty years.

175 The movement of the Ibans into this district has occurred within
166 the past 125 years. When James Brooke arrived in Sarawak, the movements
177 of the Ibans into the southern tributaries of the Rajang were just beginning. Entering from the south, they soon invaded the land north of the Rajang, driving out or subduing and assimilating the former inhabitants.

In his program of pacification, James Brooke established Fort Brooke in 1862 at the point of the division of the Rajang and Igan Rivers.
[439] Under the protection of the fort, the point soon became a nexus for trade between Chinese, Ibans, Malays, Melanaus and others. From the beginning of the center, Ibans have both served and been served by the trade carried on there.

361 Today, few Ibans in the district live more than two hours travel
177 from the town which is accessible to them by private boats, public launches and ferries, cars, taxis and buses. Their adaptation has been influenced by the development of the town as an administrative center, entrepot, and by acculturation to the values mediated through residents and visitors.

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198 Although there has been a long association between the Ibans and Sibu, the in-migration of relatively large numbers has taken place only within the past decade. The factors involved in this in-migration are numerous and complex as will become apparent. On the one hand, they are related to the problems of making a living according to the level of new expectations in many rural areas. On the other hand, they include the attractions and amenities of life in the pasar, or trading center, of education, wage-earning and escape from the farm.

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177 In keeping with the bifocal perspective of this study, the approach taken is a regional one, i.e., one in which the development of Sibu is seen in the context of the area from where its resources have come, and in the interplay between inhabitants of the urban center and rural hinterland. The rationale for this approach is that the emergence and development of Sibu can be understood only within the setting of the area from where products extracted from forest, farm and garden have supported the life of the urban residents. The townspeople, in turn, have supplied not only the goods needed and wanted by rural residents but also have interacted with them in an exchange of values and norms which have been influential in the structural and cultural changes that have occurred among rural residents.

121 While the attempt to take the regional approach may appear presumptuous, deviating from more traditional anthropological approaches,

174 own intra-ethnic conflicts. The Iban's value of headhunting among
648 enemies found expression, and the Malay chiefs were able to secure their positions through the followings they built up.

Thus, the invasion of the Rejang area in general, but Sibu in particular, opened new lands not only to the Ibans, but also to the Malays. Seeking to keep their heads, while taking advantage of the riches of the virgin Rejang territory, the Malays entered and built settlements, continued their trade for jungle produce and rice in exchange for salt and fish.[7]

C. The Ibans

175 Apart from the arrival and establishment of the Brooke Raj,
648 the Iban migrations of the nineteenth century were the most important
166 events of that century. While the migrations doubtlessly would have occurred without the Brookes, the migrations were influenced in a number of respects by Brooke government and were influential in the development of Government policies.

175 Because of the lack of historical data, the length of time in-
166 volved, and the numerous rivers and streams in Sarawak, the migrations tend to be confusing and the factors involved in them complex when dis-

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[608] [7] Fraternal relations still exist among Malays and Ibans, and when the latter are asked, Sapa ke udong nuan ("Who is your (ritual or trading)brother?" the answer almost always is, Orang Melayu, "A Malay."

175 cernible. At the opening of the nineteenth century, the Ibans were
166 largely living in the upriver areas of the Batang Lupar and Batang
[167] Saribas and their tributaries in the Second Division. They had migrated from the Kapuas headwaters in Kalimantan across the watershed into Sarawak territory some time earlier. In the first decades of the ninsteenth century, groups of Iban families had begun to penetrate the headwaters of the Katibas (Freeman 1955-11-20) and the Sarikei (Cooper 1966-23), and by 1850, they had reached the vicinity of the Rejang.[8]

By the early 1830's other families from the Lemanak, Skrang and Layar had migrated to the Entabai and Julau valleys and the headwaters of the Kanowit River. Commenting on the presence of Ibans in the Kanowit, Charles Brooke wrote early in 1859,

> "This stream is inhabited by Sea Dayaks, who have for the last fifteen or twenty years been migrating from the Saribas and Skrang districts for the purpose of obtaining new farming grounds. These exoduses took place over-land between one river and another. Such parties would do their four or five days' march, then build their houses, and proceed to farm for one or two years, after which they would recommence their march, and so on, until they arrived at their final destination."

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[657] [8] Cooper writes that Sherip Masahor (1810-1890) "removed his headquarters to Sarikei, a small town on the river Rejang, and became very friendly with the Iban people living nearby" (1966-23). Sometime before the arrival of James Brooke, "Masahor took over the administration of the Rejang district for the Sultan of Brunei", indicating that the Ibans had reached the vicinity of the Rejang prior to Brooke's coming in 1841. (ibid.)

175 While Freeman is basically correct in his recognition of a
166 two-pronged movement from the Second Division into the Rejang via the
[114] Katibas and Kanowit rivers, these were but two of the major avenues through which the Ibans moved. The migrations were not highly organized ventures involving hundreds of people, but were the gradual, continuous movements of people farming, hunting and gathering, then pressing on to new lands. Ibans from Saribas and the Krian moved to Sarikei and Binatang, and from there spread to other areas of the lower Rejang, Sibu and even to Song. Saribas Ibans also settled in parts of the Kanowit and its tributaries, especially the Julau. Skrang and Lemanak Ibans moved into the Kanowit, the former from there to Durin, the latter to the Poi and Ngemah tributaries of the Rejang and from the Poi to the Batang Igan below Sibu. Upon reaching the Rejang, the Ibans began the gradual ascent of other uninhabited tributaries, felling and clearing the jungles, until they reached the headwaters of the branches to the north as well as to the south.

These migrations have occurred within the past century and a half. At the time of publication of Ten Years in Sarawak by the Second Rajah in 1866, the Ibans had not migrated to the areas north or east of the Rejang. Within the past century, they have become the most numerous group in the Third Division and established in large numbers in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu

175 D. Factors Relating to Iban Migrations

166 In his discussions of the Iban migrations, Pringle writes that

> "the development of Iban 'piracy may be regarded as one symptom of a remarkable outburst of human energy which also led to the simultaneous commencement of Iban migration to the Third Division at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This expansion, both 'piratical' and territorial, could not have taken place without population growth, but it seems equally clear that it was linked to something other than demographic pressure."

On the same point, he writes:

> "It was also suggested that the further expansion of Iban settlement into the Rejang, which began not long before the First Rajah's arrival, was connected somehow with a more general florescence of Iban energies. This sudden ferment, the causes of which are unkown, also resulted in the simultaneous outbreak of Iban 'piracy' in the coastal waters of northwest Borneo."

Although admittedly there is much that must remain unkown, for want of information, about the factors and causes involved in the Iban migrations of the nineteenth century, nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence for us to make certain inferences that point to more than a "general florescence of Iban energies." On the basis of available data, we may suggest the following factors as contributing to these migrations.

1. Demographic Pressures

175 First, the Ibans were shifting cultivators facing demographic
166 pressures due to population growth. One element which continually has
161 kept the Ibans on the move has been their population increases in

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu

combination with generally poor soils and the techniques of shifting cultivators. The estimate of 50,000 Ibans living in the Second Division in the early nineteenth century does not seem excessive and, indeed, may be quite low in light of the present Iban population of 330,000, achieved with an increase of 1.7 per cent per annum.[9]

The Second Division is an area of 4,129 square miles, into which the Ibans moved during the nineteenth century. A quick calculation reveals that the population density did not approach the figure of 46 persons per square mile, Freeman's estimate of the maximum number that could occupy an area for cultivation and allow the optimum fallow time of 12 years (1955-134, 136). But, Freeman's estimate does not take into consideration the fact that much land in Sarawak is not suitable for cultivation. As Lee notes:

> "Although the density for the country as a whole is still very low, there are areas in Sarawak where pressure of population on land resources is becoming acute. It must also be remembered that much of the empty areas of Sarawak will not have a large carrying capacity. The coastal peat-swamp forests and the inaccessible, hilly interior with only small patches of flat fertile and have little potential value for settlement and agriculture."

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[9] For references and discussion of early sources on Sarawak's population see J. L. Noakes, "The Growth of the Population of Sarawak," in L. W. Jones 1960-319-24.

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[134]

The Second Division, like all Divisions in Sarawak, contains a mixture of good and poor soils, of peat swamps and shale hills as well as more fertile land. And population increases and shorter periods of fallowing between cultivation, resulted in diminishing yields in some areas of the Second Division.

Population pressures were not only a physical but also a cultural phenomenon. The Ibans' desire for virgin jungle for hill rice farming has long been recognized. By the end of the nineteenth century, even after thousands of their peers had migrated to the Third Division and beyond, the Residents reported an increasing number of litigations over land.[10] Such disputes are rare where there still is plenty of unfelled jungle for the taking (cf. Freeman 1955-22), but most common in the Sibu District where land prices are highly inflated, and needless to say, there is no kampong lama' ("old jungle"). Confirming this point, one reliable source stated,

> "When our grandparents settled in this area, you could travel for a day or two (by dugout and paddle) before you came to another house. Now, you can't go even half-an-hour. When they came, there were no land disputes because land was plentiful. Now, there's no end of cases."

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[10] See Bailey's Reports, SG No. 406, 1 November 1899, and No. 451, 4 August 1903.

2. Value of New Land

Implicit in the population pressures was a second factor, the obverse of the first, the Iban cultural value of new land. The Ibans are themost expansive and aggressive of the indigenous peoples of Sarawak. The institution of pejalai included, among other purposes such as the validation of the Iban male, the reconnitering of new lands and other people. In one account,[11] two brothers, Baji and Tagi', sons of Baring, on a pejalai from the Skrang, made a bark canoe (utap),[12] and travelled down the Kanowit. Coming out onto the broad expanse of the Rajang, they were astounded to find how flat the land was. They travelled as far as Bukit Lan below Sibu, then returned to bring their families to the land just waiting for the taking.

3. The Pioneer

A third factor, related to the migrations and high value of new land in Iban culture, was the traditional class system. More will be said of this ina a later chapter, but contrary to what Freeman has written about the Ibans of the Sut, the Ibans in the Sibu District had a well-developed class consciousness, which still obtains among them, particularly in the arrangement of marriages. During the nineteenth century, the pioneer (ke mubok menoa baru, "who opens up new land")

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[11] Interview with Tuai Rumah Ampan, 16 November, 1970.

[12] Such craft are still occasionally made for trips from headwaters, and abandoned after a single trip.

thereby achieved distinction for himself and secured land-rights for his descendants. Land was power, and latecomers had to make requests for land from the descendants of the pioneers. The climb to the position of aristocrat (raja berani, "brave and rich") had to commence with pioneering. The names of pioneers who opened up new territories are still remembered by their descendants,[13] as well as the feats they accomplished and their nom de guerre. In one account,

> "The first Ibans to move to Sarikei were led by Nuga (Who Cut Off The Rejand Tidal Bore) who settled at Sari'. When (Pengulu) Abas heard that Nuga was at Sari', he walked overland from Paku' to Selalang, and urged Nuga to cross the Rajang. 'We can't,' replied Nuga,' for the Beliun (Melanau), occupy that land, and we can't fight Tugau.' Nevertheless, at Abas' insistence, they crossed over and drove out the Melanaus, who scattered to Oya, Mukah, Balingian and Bintulu."[14]

The high degree of consonance between narratives related by informants in the Second and Third Divisions supports the credibility of

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[13] Which tends to be confusing because of the plethora of names, but therein illustrates the abundance and independence of movements that took place. (Tuai Rumah Ampan, 23 October, 1970).

[14] Text: Ke mula mula ia Iban datai di Sarikai, Nuga, ensumbar ia, Mantap Bena Pangka Pasang, ke diau di Sari. Ninga Nuga udah di Sari, Abas bedarat ari Paku ka Selalang, ngumbok Nuga ngelayang Batang Rajang. Batang Rajang enda ulih dipelanggang laban di-uan Beliun, ko Nuga, lalu kitai enda te-alah ka Tugau. Tang, diumbok Abas, saduai ngalah ka Beliun ka rari ngagai Oya, Mukah, Balingian enggau Bintulu.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

the accounts.[15] For example, two lemambang (bards), one from Bawang Assan, another from Song, independently supported the following accounts about famous pioneers to the Rejang:

> "Igoh apai Lamban came from the Ulu Layar to the Serikei in search of new land. He had been a leading warrior... There was no quarrel in the Layar which forced him to migrate; he wanted to be a pioneer and to seek new lands (emphasis added).
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> "At about the same time Mujah (Buah Raya) led the first migrations into the Ulu Julau, a branch of the Kanowit tributary of the Rejang. (Since other areas were already settled), Mujah kept on looking for new land, and thus came to Julau. Upon his arrival, he and his followers fought against the Rejangs, Tanjongs, Kanowits, Ukits and Lugats in many parts of the Rejang" (emphasis added)

4. Raiding and Headhunting

A fourth factor contributing either directly or indirectly to the migrations was the high value of raiding and headhunting, practiced by some but, it is important to note, not all, Ibans. Without imputing any causal relationship, those Ibans were shifting cultivators who practiced headhunting. The charter for headhunting was mythical in character, being contained in the instructions given by the spirit Puntang Raga to Serapoh: Ulit orang ke mati enda tau enda diketas enggau pala munsoh ("Mourning for the dead must be cut away with an enemy's head," Sandin 1962-12).

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[15] Particularly when they are quick to discredit one another whenever the opportunity arises.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

Since the termination of headhunting and the opening of military employment to Ibans as trackers with forces in Malaya, the Sarawak Rangers, or the Field Force, thousands of young Iban men have found it possible to fulfill their cultural expectations through participation in the military.

Another aspect of the migrations that was related to the raiding and headhunting activities of the Ibans was that some moved to escape the predatory activities of their own kind. For example, Ibans moved from the Lemanak because they were caught in the pincer-like movements of the Saribas and Skrang Ibans. One informant, commenting on the reason his people moved to Bawang Assan via Straa, Binatang, said,[16]

> "We were weary of being raided every year or two. We would harvest our rice and acquire a few things, only to be hit in a raid and lose everything, if not our lives. So, we figured it was easier to move."

It is apparent from the above that not all Ibans participated in raiding and headhunting. These feats of bravery were carried out by bands of young braves (to use Sandin's word) at the expense of fellow Ibans or people of other groups.

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[16] Text: Kami nyau puas diserang tiap taun tauka dua tuan. Udah kami ngetau lalu bulih utai mimit, tak diserang, nyau semoa sebuti' nyawa kami enda. Nya alai, ko ati kami, nyamai agi pindah. (Anyau Bakit, interview, 15 September, 1969).

5. "Big Men" among "big men"

A fifth factor contributing to the Iban migrations of the nineteenth century, one which must necessarily be discussed in some detail, was a deep resentment of the Brookes' paternalism and interference with traditional ways of life. The Ibans were oriented to a high degree of mobility and independence, and reacted to the invasions of their lives by an authoritarian government with the time-honored reactions of fight and flight. Iban society has always been (and is) highly factionalized, and the leadership patterns show numerous parallels with the "big man" complex of Melanesia, as will be discussed below.

Adapting as they did to an environment of relatively limited productivity in which they had to move every five or six years, the Ibans placed a premium on the achievements of the individual, especially the male: pejalai, pioneering, headhunting, success in farming, and tattooing (an ordeal in design to see whether a man could withstand physical pain),[17] among others.

We have mentioned the autonomy and independence of the bilik family, which produced and consumed its own food. On this point,

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[17] Several Iban men explaining why they were untattooed stated quite unashamedly that they couldn't stand the pain. Tattooing is done with five needles tied together, the points dipped in soot and driven under the skin. It is a rapidly disappearing form of art and type of ordeal.

175 Taxation in the form of exemption and door taxes was a point of
651 severe vexation among the Ibans,[27] for the taxes symbolized the responsibility that the Ibans owed to the Brookes, a responsibility that was acknowledged begrudgingly if at all. Probably originating in the pre-Brooke era when Brunei-sanctioned chiefs collected tribute, the Iban door tax was set at one pasu[28] of padi per year. By 1870, the money equivalent of eighty cents could be paid in lieu of the pasu of padi.
[669] By 1880, this was raised to one dollar. The payment of taxes as tribute to the Government or for exemption from military service was onerous to the Ibans, and misunderstanding over taxes was a prime factor in the Asun rebellion of the 1930's.[29]

175 Restrictions imposed by the Government on Iban migrations and
648 the suppression of headhunting, in the Government's attempts to establish
166 the Pax Brittania over all its wards, was another cause for unrest. Being shifting cultivators, the Ibans had moved at will and according to need into new areas which suited them for their farming. Although the Second

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[27] Ibans in the Sibu District have expressed ambivalent feelings about present-day taxes, chafing under the law that requires them to pay them, but exulting that they can claim free berau (even if they are not in need) because they have paid their taxes just like everyone else.

[804] [28] A dry measure of eight gantang, or 48 pounds of husked rice.

[29] The Brooke Raj was heavily dependent upon the "Dyak Revenue," which was reported as amounting to $26,276.18 and $27,318.36 in the years 1879-1880 (SG No. 174, April, 1881, p.29). cf. Pringle 1970-161n).

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

175 Rajah dealt with the migrations with sympathy because of his under-
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166 standing of the needs for new land,

> "nevertheless, it would be fair to say that the Rajah and his officers expended far more time and effort in attempting to restrain Iban migrations that they did trying to promote it."

The Iban migrants to the Balleh were twice repulsed by Government, in the 1870's and in 1905, before they were permitted to settle in the area in 1922, and then only under close governmental supervision.

175 Writing about the Second Rajah's policies and practices, the
648 Ranee Margaret reveals clearly the spirit of paternalism which guided her husband's programs.

> "The Rajah's object was to persuade these people to confess the error of their ways, own themselves vanquished, make peace, and build a new village under the surveillance of the Rajah's neighbouring forts.[30] The Rajah's policy on many similar occasions was always the same: when he had succeeded in crushing the head-hunting ambitions of these tribes, the thing then to be done was to turn these people into decent subjects by making them understand that the benefits to be derived from trade and commerce were more satisfactory to their well-being (and the Rajah's author's note) than their methods of murdering and cutting off the heads of their often harmless neighbours."

In the context of the traditional non-coercive political organization and premium placed on achievements by the Ibans, the

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[30] His policy also included taking as hostages the wives of all chief of a rebel area as a guarantee of their men's good behavior (SG No. 181, 1 November, 1881).

them, and in the interplay that has taken place in the past three-quarters of a century, their adaptation and orientation has changed in response to the developing town. From a people who were characterized by their independence, the Ibans of the Sibu District still maintain the value of independence as a cultural norm or ideal, but in fact are markedly dependent upon Sibu as an administrative center for the legitimization of their activities and investments, and as a center of trade for the goods they produced and others they need. The rise and development of Sibu has had widely ramifying effects both structurally and culturally in Iban society, as will be discussed below.

1. Expansion of Brooke Rule

Sibu owes its existence to the expansion of Brooke rule, Iban migrations and headhunting, and the Rajah's policy of constructing forts during the nineteenth century. Like many of Sarawak's other towns, Sibu was built where no permanent settlement had existed previously. Chinese traders were attracted to the protection of the fort and, typical of other Sarawak towns, Sibu became a center of the expanding local administration and trade.

In 1843, two events prompted the Rajah to visit the Rajang for the first time. Early in that year, a group Melanau spokesmen visited Kuching, complained about Iban headhunting, and asked for protection.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

175 two principal waterways through which the Ibans were moving into the 648 middle and lower Rejang. Further, the Kanowit District was a particularly troublesome area from the time of the first action in 1849 until the Asun rebellion, almost a century later in 1932.

2. The Founding of Fort Brooke

[166] The continuing movement of Ibans into the Rejang through the Kanowit and Sarikei Rivers, and their spread to the Igan and northern tributaries of the Rejang, prompted the construction of Fort Brooke. The strategic advantage of Sibu was its location at the point of division of the Rejang and Igan Rivers, providing a position for a relatively centralized administration of the area.

The beginning of Sibu as a town may be dated from 1862, when Fort Brooke was constructed. As noted previously, the only settlement in the area prior to that was the Melanau village at Kampong Nangka. Within a decade or so of the founding of the fort, Chinese traders had built a pasar of sixty shophouses, and Sibu was on its way to becoming the largest center for trade in the Rejang.

3. A Center in Pacification

000 The first purpose of the construction of Fort Brooke was pacification of the area under its jurisdiction so that economic development could take place. As noted in the last chapter, James Brooke was beset

A. Rice Horticulture

The Ibans who moved into the Sibu District during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were shifting cultivators. The main characteristics of shifting cultivation are,

> "rotation of fields rather than crops; clearing by means of fire; absence of draft animals and of manuring; use of human labour only; employment of the dibble stick. . . ; short periods of soil occupancy alternating with long fallow periods."

As already discussed in Chapter Two, the movements of the Ibans into the area were due to a number of factors, one being the growth of the population in the Second Division, another the Iban value of new land and the status accorded the pioneer, a cultural reinforcement of an adaptive mechanism.

The horticulture of the Ibans did not involve rotation of fields so much as the gradual extension of their farms down the Sarikei and Kanowit, and their tributaries, and on across the Rejang and up the northern branches of tributaries of the Rejang and Igan. As one Tuai Rumah related,

> "We moved from Julau to Nanga Salim, thence we farmed both sides of the river, moving to uncleared and unclaimed areas and finally came to Ulu Salim."

The settlements of the Ibans who moved into the District were by no means as permanent as they are today. Rather, temporary houses were constructed in proximity to land selected for farming, and abandoned when the Ibans moved to new sites. As two women recounted the story of

593 frequent topics of women's meetings in the urban area is, "How can I
[871] make my child obey me?" A number of parents have lamented over the effects of education on their children, saying that because the youngsters had reached From Three or Form Five, they refused to help any longer with simple chores, such as feeding livestock or getting firewood. In the Sibu pasar, parents fret over children's activities, over which they have virtually no control.

598 That the tensions and strains between members of adjacent gener-
561 ations is not a new phenomenon is apparent from the numerous expressions in Iban oral literature - folk stories, myths and proverbs - through which are projected these intergenerational conflicts.[3] Nor are these hostilities one-sided, for children resent even the mild restraints offered by parents, and the conflict of interests between parents and adult children is one of the principal causes of bilik partition.

593 Hundreds of young people have come to Sibu because of disparate
166 values with their parents, to seek cash-employment, and just because Sibu
369 is a more exciting place than the longhouse community. It is true that
561 the education system, particularly at higher levels, has a disorienting

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[539] [3] The myth, "Kumang Betelu'" (Kumang Lays Eggs) has a number of latent Oedipal connotations. The man-god Keling notices his wife, Kumang, surreptitiously going into a rice-bin to lay eggs. Angered and embarrassed over such an abnormal mode of conception, he takes his spear and pierces each of the seven eggs Kumang has laid. Instead of killing the children - all boys - he merely blinds them and, after their birth, takes them into the jungle to lose them. They are given medicine by an antu, subsequently kill an Antu Gerasi Papa (father-figure) and after many perilous journeys, are reunited to and reconciled with their parents.

593 effect upon Iban young people, so that they disdain life in the longhouse
166 and, if at all possible, take up urban domicile.[4] "Just so they have cash
369 in the pocket," complained one irate parent, "they don't want to leave the
56 [177] pasar." One young man said in his defense.

> "Our parents don't understand that for us there is no future in the longhouse. You can't get anywhere farming, and there are too many demands upon you to allow you to accumulate anything. The whole longhouse system is cut through with local jealousies."

561 Members of the senior generation criticize young people who, to
829 them, aimlessly vander the pasar in search of work.

> "They form gangs, Api' Bayat, and work as con men. Young men work as pimps (beroka) and young girls as prostitutes."

Several older adult residents of Sibu pasar used the expression of the young people who have come to the town, Sida' idup di puchok tunggul ("They live at the end of the stump").

855 In analyzing the relationships and behavior of parents and children,
593 these must be seen in the perspective of the larger society which long has
[183] valued the independence of the individual and his achievements. Of necessity brought about by the absence of parents during the day-time, children learn to fend for themselves and their siblings at an early age.

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[657] [4] A senior government official observed that while development policies encourage the return of young people to rural areas, there are few incentives to attract them in the longhouse community.

593 her husband, she lived with Ganai, her brother (Bilik No. 5, Rumah Nyala), until she remarried. Pengarah Chundi anak Rasa entirely supported his brother, Kudi, who was an invalid, until the latter's death.

593 369 166 The strong ties between siblings provide one of the principal means for in-migrants to the pasar to make the transition from rural to urban life. When an Iban establishes residence in the pasar, he is in a convenient position, where his kinsmen are concerned, to serve as housekeeper and, in some cases, employment bureau. The increased affluence, improved transportation, and the magnetism of the pasar have drawn hundreds of Ibans to Sibu. And, whereas previously they stayed with Chinese patrons or Malay partners, as soon as a kinsmen rents a room in the pasar, he is sought out for hospitality. Also, he is expected to keep his eyes open and his ears fast to the grapevine for any job-openings that may come up, and immediately inform his brothers and sisters.

797 829 593 One very ambitious and enterprising Iban man has made it to the United States where he now is studying. The basis upon which he achieved this feat was by appeal to the fictional fraternity of Christian brotherhood. The entrance of thousands of Ibans into the church has been in part due to their interpretation of the ecclesiastical community into familial terms. Thus, priests and religious workers are apai or nadi' ("father" or "brother"), depending on the relative age of the persons involved. And the church, like the Iban family, is expected to help support and fulfil the other functions common to those who stand in sibling relations.[6]

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[6] During a recent service in the Sibu Iban Methodist Church, of 43 worshippers, only three were not employees or relatives of employees of the church.

183 Egalitarianism is an important traditional norm according to which all Ibans supposedly are equal. Twelve years ago I heard the paramount chief of the Ibans, Temenggong Jugah anak Barieng, bemoan the way in which he and other Iban leaders were same as other members of their society.

[829] "The chiefs of the Kenyah and Kayan sit in their boats and their anembiak paddle for them. We Iban chiefs must paddle along with our people."

[178] These days are past for the Dato Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah, Federal Minister for Sarawak Affairs. He and other Iban ministers no longer paddle; they are given police escorts with sirens open.

183 Although the value of egalitarianism still is held by a large
178 portion of Iban society, more mobile and ambitious members are disinclined to subscribe to it. If possible, as with the emerging entrepreneurs in each community, they will exceed their fellows while remaining a part of the
[166] longhouse. But in situations where this proves impossible and where the egalitarian demands of the community frustrate individual ambitions, move-
[829] ment into Sibu or some other part of Sarawak, Brunei or Sabah is likely to occur. Many young educated Ibans have expressed the feeling that there is no future for them in the longhouse. Their presence by hundreds in Sibu is in part an attempt to achieve upward mobility and greater economic rewards for themselves than are possible in the traditional longhouse situation.